

## **Mojave-Southern and Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Councils (RAC)**

Meeting Minutes

Friday, July 20, 2012

BLM Ely District Office, 702 North Industrial Way, Ely, Nevada

### **Mojave-Southern Great Basin RAC members present and category represented:**

Joni Eastley, Chairperson	Elected Official	Category 3
Julie Von Tobel Gleason, vice-Chair	Wild Horse & Burro	Category 1
Douglas "Stretch" Baker	Transportation/ROW	Category 1
Jane Feldman	Environmental	Category 2
Ronda Hornbeck	Public at Large	Category 3
Elise McAllister	Dispersed Recreation	Category 2
Gracian Uhalde	Ranching/Grazing	Category 1

### **Northeastern Great Basin RAC members present and category represented:**

Jeff White, Chairman	Energy/Minerals	Category 1
Bill Wolf, Vice Chair	Public-at-large	
Vince Garcia	Native American Tribes	Category 3
Cyd McMullen	Archaeology	Category 2
Tony Carone	Energy/Minerals	
Bruce Holmgren	State Agency	Category 3
Laurie Carson	Elected Official	Category 3
David Meisner	Academia	Category 3
John Prier	Environment	Category 2
Kevin Lee	Transportation/ROW	
Jake Carter	Grazing	

### **Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Representatives Present:**

Ken Miller	BLM Elko District Manager, DFO NEGBRAC
Mary Jo Rugwell	BLM Southern Nevada District Manager, DFO MSGBRAC
Doug Furtado	BLM Battle Mountain District Manager
Rosemary Thomas	BLM Ely District Manager
Michael Herder	BLM Associate Ely District Manager
Bryan Fuell	BLM Elko District, Wells Field Manager
Tom Seley	BLM Battle Mountain District, Tonopah Field Manager
Victoria Barr	BLM Ely District, Caliente Field Manager
Michael Dwyer	Program Manager
Joe Vieira	Project Manager
Lesli Ellis-Wouters	BLM Elko District Public Affairs Specialist
Chris Hanefeld	BLM Ely District Public Affairs Specialist
Tara North	BLM Ely District Manager Administrative Assistant

### **Public members present**

Jose Noriega	Ranger, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Ely Ranger District
Callie Hendrickson	National Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board

Annette White	Public
Judy Bumdorf	Public
Wayne Bumdorf	Public
Mike Gleason	Public

A copy of each attachment is listed in the text of or at the end of these minutes and is also on file with the official copy of the minutes in the Elko and Southern Nevada district offices of the BLM. Persons desiring to review said minutes should contact Lesli Ellis-Wouters, BLM Elko District public affairs specialist, at (775) 753-0386 or Hillerie Patton, BLM Southern Nevada District public affairs specialist, at (702) 515-5046.

9:10 a.m.     **Spring Valley Wind Farm**

Scott Creech from Spring Valley Wind Division of Pattern Energy spoke about the project. The 66 windmills here will generate enough energy to benefit 200,000 homes. They have a contract to supply power to NV Energy for 20 years.

**Bat Radar Equipment**

Spring Valley Wind has an extensive bat radar system. They have hired college students to examine the effects of wind energy on bats in the area. They are searching for bat and bird deaths as part of the project monitoring requirement. Spring Valley Wind will have more data than anywhere in the world.

Construction of the plant took 6-7 months of hard work and brought business into the City of Ely. There was a lot of positive press out of Ely.

- 350 Million Dollars for the cost of the project
- 250 people worked on this project.
- This will be competitive with normal energy

The gear boxes on the units are foreign made, but assembled in the U.S. Blades and units are made in Utah.

Rehabilitation of the land will take three to 10 years. The roads will be reduced back to 16 feet, and the shoulders will be reseeded with native plant seed.

After completion of the project, there will be a permanent staff of seven. Five people will be dedicated to turbine maintenance. There will be 12-15 people housed in Ely at any given time. The turbines stop at 50 miles per hour or over and are 300 feet high. They turn at 16 revolutions per minute. When a plane passes nearby the wind towers will stop rotating. The life of this project is 20 years, but if maintained, can last 40 to 60 years. The turbines can operate up to -20 degrees before blades need to be shut down. \$250,000 went to pay for the fire department during construction to make sure all safety regulations were met. Water had to be brought into the project while in construction.

- Turbine model: Siemens SWT 2.3 - 101
- # of Turbines: 66
- Rotor Speed: 6-16 rpm

- Hule Height: 80m or 263ft
- Blade length: 49m or 161 ft
- Tower base diameter: 4.5m or 15ft
- cut-in Speed: 4 m/s or 9mph
- Cut-out speed: 25m/s or 56 mph

### **Aug 8th Grand Kick-Off Event on Site**

10:55 a.m.

### **Solar Programmatic EIS and the Solar Regional Mitigation Planning Pilot Project** (Map on file at Elko District Office) Mike Dwyer:

The Final Solar PEIS was made public this week. It identifies 17 Solar Energy Zones (SEZs) in 6 Western States. Five of the 17 SEZs are in Nevada. SEZs are areas that, through a public process, have been identified as having good potential for utility-scale solar power generation while avoiding significant resource conflicts. While most of the impacts associated with development of the SEZs are either avoided or are minimized by design features and best management practices presented in the Solar PEIS, there will be some unavoidable adverse impacts. In an attempt to mitigate these unavoidable impacts, the BLM has initiated a pilot project for the Dry Lake SEZ in Clark County, Nevada to explore opportunities to off-set unavoidable impacts with off-site mitigation and to do so in a manner that encourages development within the SEZs. The project will kick-off with a public workshop on August 29-30. A Draft Regional Mitigation Plan for the Dry Lake SEZ is expected by the end of calendar year 2012.

11:30 a.m.

### **North Schell Fire**

Jose Noriega discussed the prescribed burn at North Schell. (Handouts on file at Elko District Office)

This was a landscape level project to thin the encroachment of pinyon-juniper and allow for restoration of aspen stands in a 78000 acre project area.

June 9 Test Burn at 9:30 p.m.

- 25-30 acres
- Good results
- No red flag warnings in the area

June 12 Helicopter dropped fire starters into main burn area

- Fire got down to canyon, hit sagebrush and went out
- Fire reached dead and down mahogany in inaccessible terrain. Could not get firefighters to the area and went to a monitor status.
- Fire grew ½ mile from origin
- Monitored for several days.

June 16, 3 a.m.

- Tree on fire rolled down hill and caught everything on fire.

June 17, 11:35 a.m.

Difficult to get into fire without putting our crew into danger, it was 4 miles down the canyon before help could make it up to a safe place and work on putting the fire out.

- BLM crews were assigned to the fire and built a dozer line.
- Northern movement stopped; went south and put a dozer line in and crew worked the ridge and put in another dozer line
- We did end up with 6.8 inches of rain, within 6 hours our fires became floods.

Community very supportive

- not been declared contained yet
- not a single Sage Grouse was hurt
- Already cotton and willows are 12 inches tall and growing back.

A regional forest team was sent to analyze the fire and prepare an after action report.

Working Lunch

1:34 p.m. **Public Comment:**

Gracian Uhalde: Recommends getting together once a year with both RAC groups so that we are both on the same page.

Julie and I were on the tour of various horse programs and someone came up with the idea to help weed out older horses. It's a pill that can be put behind the ear of an older horse and this would put the animal down in 3 months.

Callie Hendrickson: White River and Douglas Creek Conservation District. I got involved in the WH&B Issue because we have several horse areas within our district boundaries. Yes, Colorado does not have the number of horses that Nevada has but it's a big issue for range health wherever there are excess horses. I appreciate the chance to join the tour and see Nevada's challenges. I get the sense from the RAC that many of you are frustrated and discouraged but I have to encourage you not to give up. I encourage you to get even more engaged in the program. Having over 12,000 horses above ALM, most of which are in Nevada, is not acceptable.

We have 47,000 horses in holding. This is not acceptable. I encourage you to write letters to Washington D. C., and BLM management regarding your concerns every time you meet.

I am concerned with National Office direction of reducing the number of horses gathered off the range. The rangeland has to be protected because if you don't have healthy range you don't have healthy horses.

Get a letter out there and voice your opinion.

Joni Eastley: Board of Directors Nevada Association of County Commissioners are taking legal action to make BLM follow the WHB Act to maintain AMLs, and RACs are working together.

All three DMs in the NE RAC indicated the wild horse issue is still number one.

Scoping comment letters on Secretary Salazar's policy were sent in a year and half ago. Have a WHB topic for our next meeting.

Judy Bundorf: property owner in Cold Creek, a HMA outside of Las Vegas, commented that there are horses everywhere in Cold Creek. She remembers when she and her husband went to Cold Creek to enjoy both the horses and the elk. Now there appears to be no elk just horses.

1:54 p.m.

**Closed Public Comment:**

Doug Furtado: Getting sued from Western Watersheds Project and invited Katie Fite to come hear what we have to say and listen to what she has to say. This will be beneficial to hear her point of view and her hear ours.

By doing some outreach with these groups, its not to change their mind, it's to show that we care and that it's important to take care of the animals, and as a result, they are not fighting us. I would suggest at the next RAC meeting invite someone like Laura Lee and hear what she has to say and for her to know what we are doing. She has sued us many times and has gotten Temporary Restraining Orders granted. It's submitting those letters and providing input to our EAs that will help with our horse issues along with other issues we are having. Having their point of views will give us better idea how to write the letters with more detail.

We are going to have to stand up and invite them to our meetings to help us in our meetings and for everyone to see all sides of the problem.

Rosey: Thank you District Manager Staff for this event and pulling everything together. RACs, thanks for investing your time and effort in making this a wonderful meeting.

Rosey: Map for our fuels stop: Look at map along the way to see where the Apex Wind Farms are proposed

2:50 p.m.

**Robinson Sub-Station NV Energy:** Walt Saner, Staff Construction Manager

- SWIP South 500 KV Transmission line connection to Falcon to Gonder
- New design for more pleasant view, it's best for the birds
  - 300 Volt Line transform into 500,000 volts
  - won't need to import power
  - saved 9 million dollars moving site over from rocky landscape
  - this is more level site
  - almost 0 extra dirt
  - notified this week we will be connecting to Southern Utah
  - water from Ely and some from Clark County was used on dust control
  - 305 miles of wire
  - 500,000 lbs without the oil
  - 960,000 lbs with oil

Construction Operation Plan working with the BLM and parts of their responsible on the follow rules

- Will complete construction September 2013.
- This is an unmanned station
- Elko staff will come and maintain this site, others don't know the equipment and it's a union contract. Elko well be the first to respond if anything happens.
- Renovation has already started
- Top soil already spread. Fences are painted to visually help blend in the towers
- Type two base gravel applied to the road so dust will be minimal

The Largest Substation built at one time

- 60 acres
- go out at 345,000 volts
- Used JM Trucking and Bath Lumber local business, boost the economy.
- Everything has to be "Buy American"
- We don't have control where the power goes, we just do the work.
- 1592 MCM
- 2500 MCM biggest Wire
- Sept/Oct next year to be finished
  - With Birds nesting can make it longer

3:55 p.m. Rosemary Thomas adjourned the meeting.

APPROVED BY:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Joni Eastley, Chairperson  
Mojave-Southern Great Basin  
Resource Advisory Council

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Jeff White, Chairperson  
Northeastern Great Basin  
Resource Advisory Council

- Minutes provided by Tara North, BLM Ely District Office -

Attachments:

1. *Draft Solar PEIS* handout
2. Project Location Map Showing Proposed Transmission Route, ON Line Project
3. BLM Sage Grouse PPH and PGH map
4. NV Energy's Renewable Energy Sources handout